

MESOPOTAMIA

The First Human Civilization

c. 3500 BCE

Mesopotamia

...is located in the fertile land between the Tigris & Euphrates Rivers in modern-day Iraq.



Mesopotamia Timeline

Sumerians c. 3000 BCE

- First cities (Ur & Uruk); First writing system (cuneiform); Invention of the wheel; Ziggurat

Akkadians c. 2200 BCE

- Sargon conquers city-states, creates the first empire

Babylonians c. 1800 BCE

- Hammurabi creates first law code; Calendar; Concept of zero; Number system based on 60

Hitties c. 1200 BCE

- Developed iron tools and weapons; Horse-drawn chariots

Israelites c. 1200 BCE

- First monotheistic religion (Judaism); Abraham father of 3 world religions; Solomon built first Jewish temple in Jerusalem

Phoenicians c. 1200 BCE

- Sailed, explored & traded Med. Sea; Developed first alphabet

Mesopotamia Timeline

Assyrians c. 650 BCE

- Great conquerors; New army structure

Chaldeans c. 570 BCE

- Nebuchadnezzar; Hanging Gardens; Deportation of the Hebrews; Old Testament compiled

Persians c. 500 BCE

- Largest empire; Royal Road; Zoroastrianism; Provinces and tax system



Mesopotamian Cities



Today: Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan

Regions

Sumer
Akkad
Assyria
Phoenicia
Palestine
Persia

Cities

Ur
Uruk
Babylon
Assur
Nineveh
Tyre
Jerusalem
Persepolis

Mesopotamian Cities

Cities in Mesopotamia built walls for protection from invaders. An inner city protected the temple and palace with a second wall.



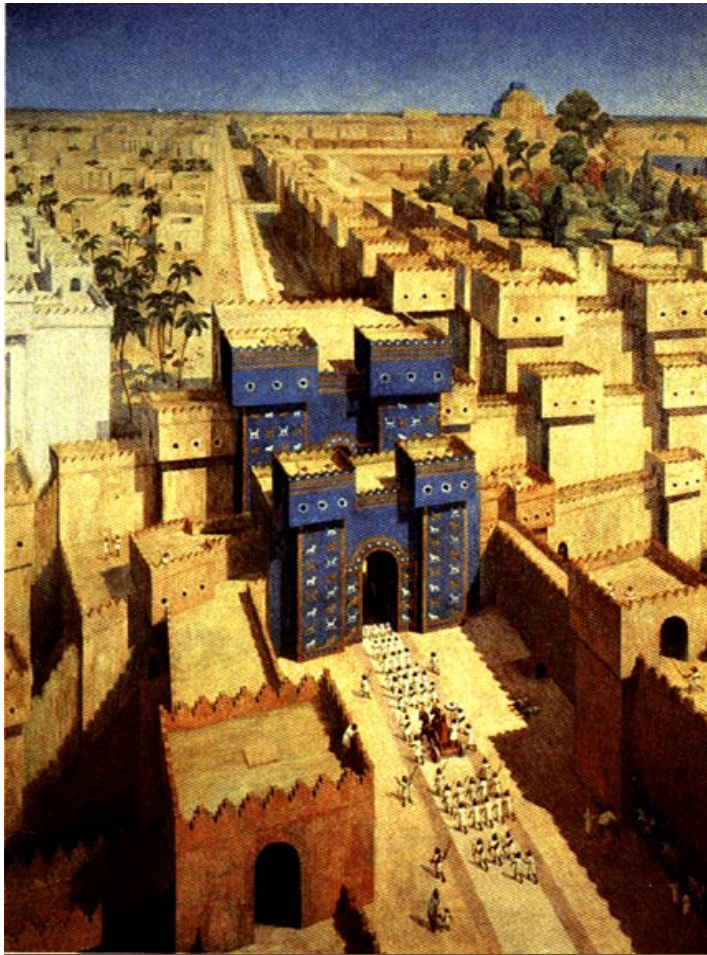
Mesopotamian Cities



Housing was jumbled together in an irregular mass. Streets were narrow and winding with inadequate drainage. Refuse was thrown into the streets, which caused a continual rising of the street level.

Ishtar Gate

Built around 575 BCE by Nebuchadnezzar & dedicated to the god Ishtar. One of the eight gates of the inner city of Babylon. Made of brick with copper/turquoise glaze and gold leaf. Thirty-eight feet high and decorated with dragons, lions & bulls.



Mesopotamians developed the use of arches, columns and domes.



Mesopotamian Art



Mesopotamians used clay and glazes to artistically symbolize their stories, daily lives, and values.



Ziggurat

Ancient
stepped
temple
where grain
was stored



Mesopotamian Religion



- Polytheistic
- Patron gods
- Professional gods
- Great gods
- Personal gods

Mesopotamian Religion

Great God	Association	Symbol
Anu	Sky	Bull
Enlil	Air	Horned Crown
Utu (Shamash)	Sun/Justice	Sun's Rays
Nanna	Moon	Crescent
Inanna	Love/War	Star/Lion
Ninhursag	Earth	Womb
Enki	Water/Wisdom	Water/Turtle



Cuneiform

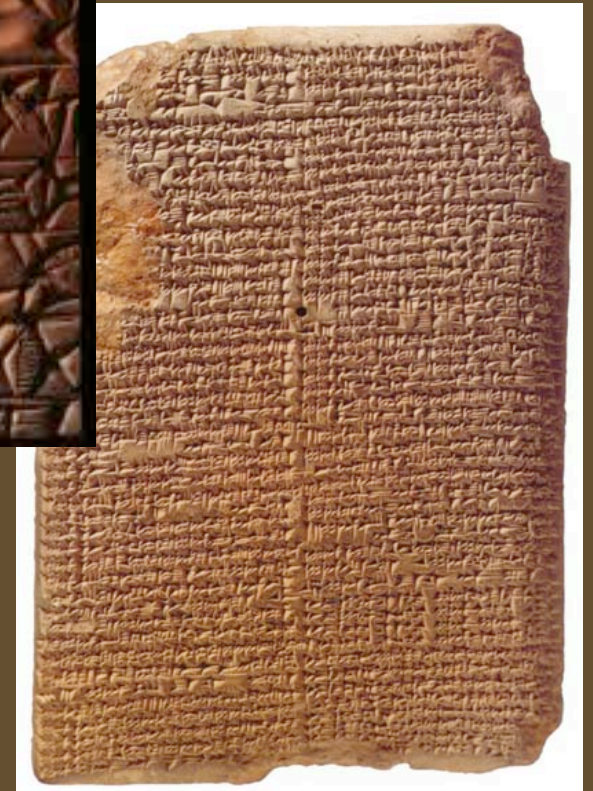
(Q-ni-form)



First writing system ever developed. A good way to keep track of all that surplus food!

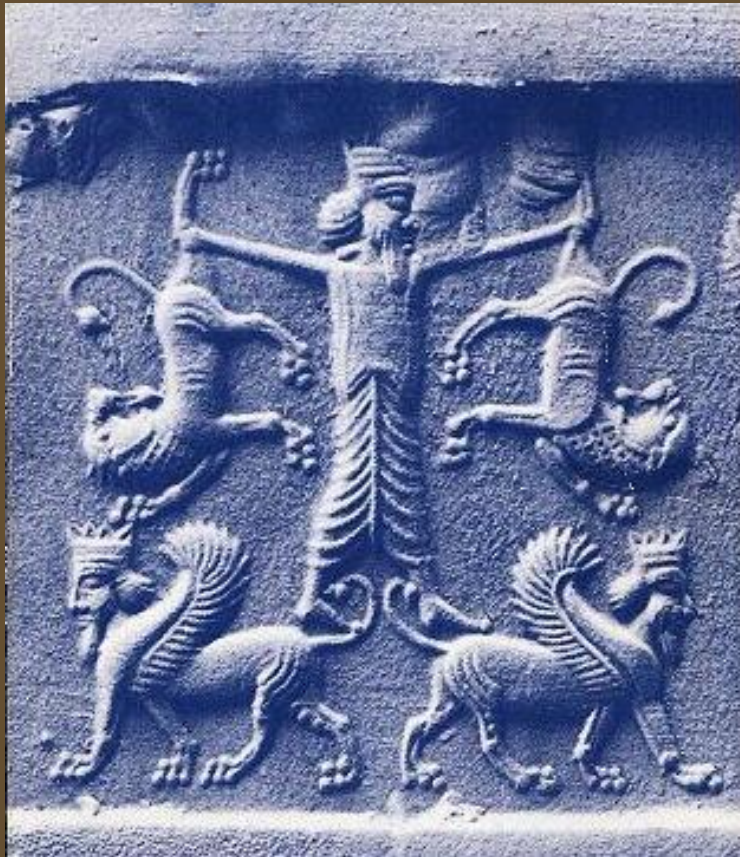


Also: myths, epics, folktales, prayers, hymns, proverbs, letters, fables and more!



Mesopotamian Writing

Epic of Gilgamesh



- Long narrative poem
- Describes a hero's journey
- Part man, part god
- Identity & self-discovery
- Meaning of Life
- Friendship
- Fear of sickness & death
- Forces of evil
- Search for immortality
- First account of a great flood

Sargon



Ruler of the
world's first
empire

From the city-
state of Akkad

Inspiration for
later kings



War & Conquest

- Protection
- Economic gains
- Resources
- Slaves
- Pleasing the gods



Hammurabi's Code

One of the first legal codes, or set of laws, written down for all to follow



- Presumes Innocence
- Use of evidence
- Harsh punishments
- Law of Retaliation
- No extenuating circumstances
- Protect weak from strong
- Individual rights



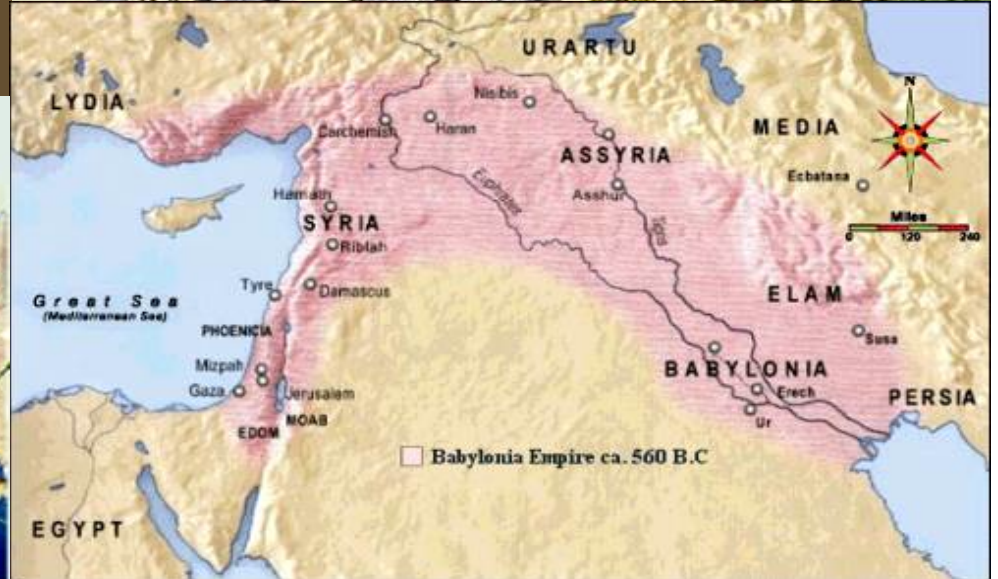
The Assyrians

- Tribe of warriors
- Iron armor & weapons
- Well-organized army
- Small units
- Cavalry & archers
- Road system
- Cruel & destructive



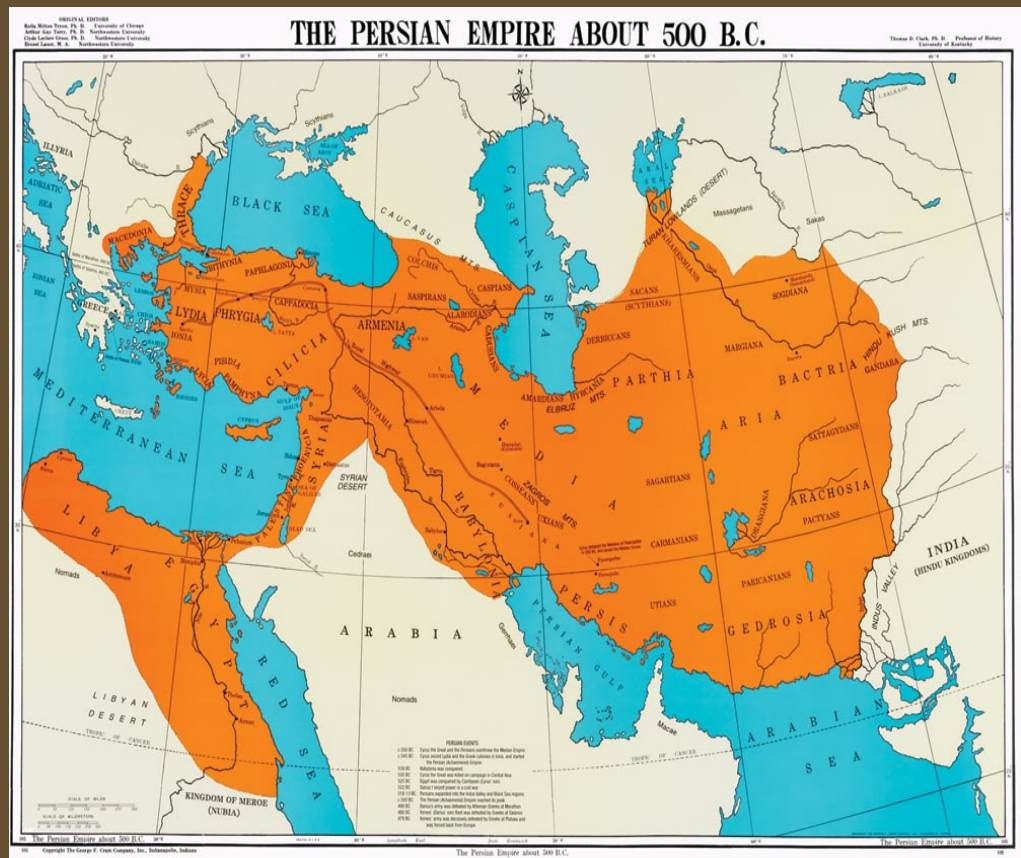
Nebuchadnezzar

Defeated the Assyrians & Egyptians
Destroyed Jerusalem & the Jewish Temple
Brought 15,000 Jews to Babylon as slaves
Enlarged & fortified Babylon
Built huge ziggurat (Tower of Babel?)
Astronomers mapped the stars & named the Zodiac



Persian Empire

Cyrus the Great conquered
Babylon & Egypt
Sent the Jews back to Israel
Darius I divided empire into 20
provinces with satraps
(governors)
Provinces left alone as long as
they paid taxes
Royal Road increased trade,
supervision & military
movement
Zoroastrianism (monotheistic,
cosmic struggle)



Mesopotamian Social Structure

1. King
2. Ruling class & priests
3. Officials, managers, soldiers
4. Merchants, craftsmen, teachers
5. Peasants & laborers
6. Slaves

Mesopotamian Social Structure

- Rulers
 - Managed & financed public services; arranged religious ceremonies; maintained irrigation; controlled surpluses; administered justice & law
- Women
 - Daughters of fathers; wives of husbands; trained to grind flour, cook & make cloth; might sell excess; midwife
- Marriage
 - Arranged by families; performed at puberty; husband gives dowry; bride becomes part of husband's family
- Mobility
 - People could move up on the social scale through school or wealth
- Schools
 - Young boys went to school from dawn to dusk to train to become scribes